1: Kroeber E-5 (1901) 1908
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

A wife inherited practically nothing from her husband. If she had been faithful to him and had been of a good disposition, her parents-in-law might give her a certain number of horses or other property. The tent was considered the woman's possession while she lived with her husband; but on his death, even this was no longer her property. If the tent was worth keeping at all, it generally went to the dead man's sister, if she was newly married. A man, on the contrary, inherited his wife's property, though he generally gave back part of it to her relatives.

A woman, on her husband's death, went back to live with her parents, or, if these were dead, with her brother, uncle, or other relative. An old woman, on the death of her husband, generally went to live with her children, most frequently with a daughter.

On the death of a brother, especially a beloved one, or of his father or his son, a man cut his hair and went out naked (with only a buffalo robe) on the prairie to cry from morning until late at night. Women, besides cutting their hair, and cutting themselves (especially on the leg) until they bled, would also go out to cry, naked from the waist up. A sister cut herself for a brother, but a mother mourning for a child underwent the most pain. Of course the mourning was greatest for an only child. In such a case, parents might give away everything in their tent and nearly all their horses, stripping themselves of property so thoroughly as almost to go naked. Some mourners fasted for a number of days. If, while a person was crying on the prairie, one should in joke attempt to scare him, he might kill the disturber. Mourners were the bravest people in war, caring about no danger whatever.

Burial was in trees, on high rocks, or in caves inaccessible to wolves and coyotes. The corpse was wrapped in a burial robe.

A menstruating woman was called niniftixtj. It is said that she did not retire to a separate lodge, or eat separately from her family; but she did not approach a sick patient, because of the evil effect she would have on his condition by her presence. Some women were said to wear a breech-cloth during their menstruation.

In childbirth, women either lay or knelt. They grasped a stick supported in a horizontal position by two upright forked sticks set in the ground. After the umbilical cord had been severed, the end was left on the child. It was thought to fall off on the fourth day. The woman who had cut the umbilical cord received as a gift the knife she had used. A woman who washed a new-born child was given the vessel in which it was washed. The afterbirth was hung in a tree. If it were left lying to be handled, the child would be afflicted with sores. For three or four days after birth, the child was given suck by other women than its mother. This statement apparently refers chiefly to a woman's first child.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

"They usually cut the cord long, say four to six inches, because they were afraid the infant would bleed to death if they cut it short. You kind of drain it and get it cleaned out and tie it once. Apply a powdered root and then put a band around the body. It usually takes four days before it drops off." Since the cord is part of the body and they wanted to keep it close to its owner, when the cord came off, they placed it in a small fancy bag filled with sweetgrass or tobacco and pinned the bag to the clothing right at the back of the neck. Singer said that she had heard that boys used to wear this little bag tied to the wrist rather than at the back of the neck as girls did. Good care was taken of the bag until adulthood. The bag was usually in the shape of a turtle, with a little head. Although Coming Daylight had made two such bags, she didn't know why they used this shape except that it had been done thus for generations.[5] Mary's grandmother, however, made a little container for Mary's own son and it was in the shape of a snake with a head. Mary added: "And the Gros Ventres don't like snakes either. But my grandmother made that one in the shape of a snake on account of a dream she had."

The afterbirth was disposed of just as soon as possible, preferably by having someone place it good and high in the branches of a tree.[6] The person who disposed of the afterbirth was not supposed to let anyone see him do so, although the informants did not know the reason for the secrecy. It is more customary at present to burn the afterbirth as the whites do, but Coming Daylight remarked that she had done that only once,—on the occasion when she was caught out in the open all alone and had to deliver herself.

A mother rested quite a while after her child was born because it was said that working would make her sweat and that would hurt her milk. The child of a woman who worked a great deal immediately after its birth would not grow up to be so healthy as the child of one who took it easy. In the opinion of Coming Daylight and of Singer a woman should sit up only after four days and get up and be walking around in about ten days. Coming Daylight her-

[5] For discussion of these navel amulets and illustrations thereof, see Kroeber, 1908, pp. 166–67, and plate IX.

[6] "If it were left lying to be handled, the child would be afflicted with sores." Kroeber, 1908, p. 181.

2: Flannery E-5 (1940-1948) 1953
NQ13 Gros Ventre NQ13

846 self had to get up sooner and help with cooking because she was an only wife, except for the short time during her first marriage when her sister was co-wife. The midwife usually stayed and looked after the infant for a few days, at least until the cord came off.

Coming Daylight always put on a belt of rawhide about a foot wide immediately after delivery and laced it up tighter each day. She said the Gros Ventre women were strict about this practice as it "put the figure back into place."

If a woman were able to rest quietly after childbirth the flow should stop in about two weeks. If she worked, it was longer, perhaps a month. At any rate, after the flow stopped, a woman wrapped a blanket around herself and someone then held under the blanket a pan of live coals on which medicine had been sprinkled. Woman claimed they felt much better after this "fumigation." [157] There was also another medicine which Coming Daylight described as "good to clean you out after childbirth." This was made from a powdered root, a little pinch of which was put in a couple of quarts of water and turned the water about the color of tea. There was no bitter taste and the patient drank it like tea and instead of water.

[834] It was said that Gros Ventre men did not resume marital relations until at least a month after the baby was born,—often they deferred the resumption of relations even longer.

853 There was medicine given to make the mother's milk come. It was made from the same root as that used in the Crazy Dance. [278] The infant was not put to the breast immediately, as someone else drew out the "first milk" (colostrum) and spit it out. "After [825] that, the milk would be the right blue color. Should a woman be all alone when her child was born, she might have puppies draw out that 'first milk.'" Cora believes it is absolutely necessary to follow this rule. When her own daughter, for example, delivered her firstborn, an old woman offered to draw off this "first milk," but the daughter refused—so now she can give milk only from one breast and has to supplement her infant's feeding with milk from a bottle. No water or oil was given the infant before its first nursing. They started the baby to nurse after the colostrum had been drawn off "because there is something in the mother's milk that cleans the baby out."